

# Grant Application

## Montana Land Information Act

### Fiscal Year 2011

#### Applicant Information

**1. Primary Applicant (Required):**

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**Organizational Unit (if applicable)**

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Division:

**2. Other Project Participants or Partners - please list all:**

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**2. Other Project Participants or Partners - please list all:**

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**Other Project Participants or Partners - please list all:**

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**2. Other Project Participants or Partners - please list all:**

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**2. Other Project Participants or Partners - please list all:**

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**2. Other Project Participants or Partners - please list all:**

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**2. Other Project Participants or Partners - please list all:**

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**2. Other Project Participants or Partners - please list all:**

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**2. Other Project Participants or Partners - please list all:**

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**2. Other Project Participants or Partners - please list all:**

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**2. Other Project Participants or Partners - please list all:**

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3. Date Submitted (Required): 02-17-2010 4. Date Received by State:

4. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project (Required):

*Rocky Mountain Front: Local Planning in a Regional Cooperative*

## **1. Project Goals, Objectives and Risks**

The goal of this project is to develop a regional GIS and stakeholder collaborative along the Rocky Mountain Front to address growth, economic development, and resource-related issues through a land-use planning decision-support system. This proposal focuses on MLIA Goal 3, Objectives 3.1 and 3.2.

There are three basic objectives related to our goal: (1) use Montana framework layers and other GIS data to develop a landscape suitability analysis that will inform a model of residential growth potential and economic development opportunities within the region; (2) develop a decision-support system using this information that will help elected officials more meaningfully engage with constituents regarding land-use planning; and (3) develop a training program for decision-makers, planners, GIS staff, and other partners that will bridge technological gaps among the partners, provide a foundation of information and method for assisting in decision-making, and foster a collaborative working\planning environment in the region. This effort can serve as a demonstration project, which could be replicated by other counties and\or tribes throughout the state.

Teton County will administer the project that includes as partners Pondera and Lewis and Clark counties, and their inclusive municipalities. Additional partners include the Great Falls Development Authority, Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Lewis and Clark National Forest, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, among the other parties named above.

Along the Rocky Mountain Front, county commissioners, watershed groups, and public land managers are wrestling with issues related to residential, commercial, and industrial growth, energy development, natural resources management, and tourism and recreational uses. Such issues present short and long-term planning challenges related to traditional economies and lifestyles, wildlife, energy resources, and community development. Partner counties and municipalities have limited GIS and planning staffs, or limited capacity to help neighboring jurisdictions.

Therefore, a primary intent of this project is to provide partners with data, models, and decision-support tools. This effort will help local governments develop better decision-support processes and increased capacity to work with their constituents and state and federal agencies regarding local land-use and economic development planning and decision-making. The project involves leveraging the well conceived methods and vast amount of data associated with decision-support processes and projects recently conducted by the Departments of Natural Resources and Conservation, Fish Wildlife and Parks, and Environmental Quality. In so doing, our approach will be to use appropriately scaled data to develop a land capability and suitability analysis as well as develop methods and data to forecast regional residential and economic growth. These efforts will use the MSDI framework layers and many other public and private sector GIS resources. By integrating recent agency decision-support activities with this process, we can put forth a high-quality and local-government targeted set of decision-support tools to foster local land-use planning. To ensure the potential of this information and tool is maximized, local officials in the region will receive training to help them understand how the GIS and decision-support methods can assist in local planning and policy-making. Staff will also receive training to ensure they are able to integrate these methods and tools into local planning efforts, and as part of the broader collaborative.

This proposal fits most closely within the **MLIAC L2011 Land Plan Goal 3 – Improved quality and efficiency in the business processes of stakeholders through leveraged partnerships, consistent availability of relevant critical land information and the use of GIS technology.** It equally applies to Objectives 3.1 *Integrated uses of geospatial data in the business and decision-making processes of state policy makers* and 3.2 *Encourage partnerships that bridge the technological divide through inter-sector collaboration.* Because proposal requirements are to focus on one objective, we primarily address *Objective 3.2.*

To meet this objective we plan to develop a working partnership primarily consisting of county and local governments in Teton, Lewis and Clark, and Pondera counties, though we anticipate these efforts will be applicable to tribes and other jurisdictions in the region and state. Additional partners include state and federal resource agencies and non-governmental organizations, as listed above. We will use MSDI framework layers and other GIS data to develop information that will provide decision-support to local governments related land use and economic development planning. Much as the Departments of Natural Resources and Conservation, Fish Wildlife and Parks, and Environmental Quality developed tools to aid in agency decision support, we propose developing the data and methods that best meet the land-use decision-support needs of local government. Furthermore, we will provide training to local elected officials, planners, and GIS staff so that they may efficiently incorporate GIS data, information, and decision-support tools in the planning and decision-making processes. These efforts will place local governments with diverse operational capacities on the same technological footing. We expect that the information developed through modeling and the training provided to use that information in a decision-support context will foster the kind of environment necessary to address growth, economic development, and impacts to resources in a regional context. With the proper tools and training, we can foster collaboration by pooling resources for training and data development, as well as leveraging funding sources. Also, by using common datasets, analyses, and planning tools we will develop an environment where local governments can support each other when unforeseen situations arise and short-term assistance is needed to stretch limited resources. We want to create what can be thought of as a GIS barn-raising, where neighbor helps neighbor.

Briefly relating to *Goal 3, Objective 3.1 – Integrated uses of geospatial data in the business and decision-making processes of state policy makers.* When reviewing planning efforts with significant local policy implications, GIS provides the ability to work with local data and conduct analyses in a more informed manner. Our aim is to integrate and leverage data from the recent regional economic strategic plan prepared by the Great Falls Development Authority and Praxis Strategy Group, as well as recent efforts by the Departments of Natural Resources and Conservation, Fish Wildlife and Parks, and Environmental Quality, the Western Governors Association Western Renewable Energy Zone analysis, and other regional planning efforts that directly influence policy decisions and thus the local landscape.

The risk to existing framework layers and the GIS portal and map center are minimal if the project is not funded. However, the risk to using framework layers and developing locally useful data and information will remain high if we fail to develop cooperative efforts to build GIS capacity in rural Montana.

As stated above, we propose a regional service center approach where rural counties and cities work collaboratively to build GIS capacity to support local planning and operations. There will be significant



capacity building and training, with supplemental contracted services to achieve long-term use and sustainability in this regard. Our approach will create a framework where existing GIS staff in the more urban areas of the region receive mentoring and support, but without placing on them unrealistic expectations of full time support for the more rural areas. The benefits accruing from a successful inter-sector collaboration are significant and include dramatically improved information to consider and make policy decisions, increased efficiencies of scale from pooled resources, reduced litigation and land use controversies through planning and conflict avoidance, the ability to attract additional resources, and the wise use of natural resources. Similarly, the land-use planning and GIS-based decision-support tools are useful in emergency preparedness, infrastructure and fiscal impact studies, and other community processes.

## **Framework Layers**

The suitability analysis and growth forecasting will make use of all MSDI framework layers, other Montana GIS initiatives, commercial data, and derivative analytical map layers. We are patterning our efforts on proven GIS models developed by Sonoran Institute and University of Montana scientists, supplemented by ESRI Business Analyst data, software and web services.

## **2. Technical Approach**

### ***a. Scope of Work***

There are six steps in the scope of work. These will be required in an RFP for contracted services:

- 1) Develop an appropriately scaled GIS-based suitability model accounting for land use and resource constraints, infrastructure, and favorable development factors. These efforts may be patterned off of those used by the DNRC Statewide Assessment Working Group – for example, using a watershed approach to modeling – or other statewide decision-support and mapping efforts. Translate, where appropriate, to scales necessary to address local government land-use planning efforts – for example, a large-scale planning grid.
- 2) Develop residential and economic growth forecasts, and build-out and long-term visioning scenarios, as well as short term land-use planning tools.
- 3) Obtain demographic and economic data, maps, and reports for addresses in the region via web services and ESRI's Business Analyst data or web service subscriptions.
- 4) Develop locally defined land-use indicators with each partner that will be expressed in maps, reports, and charts using ArcView and CommunityViz software. Evaluate local growth plans with residential and economic development scenarios, time series analysis, capacity allocation, and infrastructure cost/benefit analysis.
- 5) Train local, state, and federal decision-makers and staff on how to use and maintain the land-use decision-support software and collaborative technology tools to support this regional GIS collaborative. We anticipate on-site contact work with consultants and experienced GIS partners developing the data and models, including consultation and training sessions for elected officials, planners, and GIS staff.
- 6) Follow up with post-training consultation, reinforcement, and support.

We are proposing an analytical framework that uses geospatial analysis, a land-use planning decision-support system, and local capacity building integrated through a regional collaborative. Partners will share common data, software, and training procedures running ArcGIS and CommunityViz, and open source Python scripts and R statistical software. Partners will require separate workstation-based systems. Hardware and software consists of a portable or desktop computer, ArcView 9.X, CommunityViz 9.X, and the commitment to train and enable local staff to use the end results.

We anticipate using two online mapping, demographic and economic analysis web services, ESRI Site Viewer licensed by the Great Falls Development Authority – this will complement the existing service provided for Lewis and Clark by the Montana Business Assistance Connection (MBAC.BIZ) – and ESRI Business Analyst Online Premium Service – this new ESRI hosted ArcServer application will supplement existing services such as the Department of Commerce’s “Montana Means Business” web site. Lewis & Clark County will also use their existing county web mapping system. This service will provide a valuable test of providing web-based value-added map layers. Both web mapping services will provide a valuable subset of data, reports and maps. However, the primary focus is affordable workstation-based systems that can be implemented and maintained in a local setting.

We will also rely on ESRI’s new “Search and Share” functions for collaborative mapping among jurisdictions. This will be supplemented by a Socialtext wiki license for 20 designated representatives of the partners. This will provide online collaboration and support. Separate training sessions for local officials will address GIS and decision-support tools. Hands on instruction on the basics of ArcView and CommunityViz will be contracted. We also propose follow up training, project mentoring, and assistance to facilitate adoption and maintenance of the project.

***b. Deliverables***

1. The primary deliverable will be the creation of an on-going regional GIS collaborative, with enough local capacity-building to sustain it. Our proposal is built on sound methods, with well accepted GIS software that has proven effective with part-time GIS staff and planners in rural areas.
2. Input data, methods and results associated with development of an appropriately scaled land suitability analysis.
3. Input data, methods and results associated with development of residential growth forecasts.
4. Methods associated with the development of an appropriately scaled decision-support tool. This includes locally defined land-use indicators and results from scenario development activities.
5. Methods and curriculum associated with trainings for elected officials, planners, and GIS staff.

Work in this regard will require the contractor to develop and deliver a predicted growth dataset using scale-appropriate GIS methods and analysis. This will include the number and distribution of predicted residential growth for partner jurisdictions. The model will incorporate socio-economic and demographic data, as well as natural resources data, and services measures. Any applicable statistical model will use a classification and regression tree technique implemented in R statistical software.

The growth forecast deliverable will be in a form to allow planners to use simple CommunityViz sketch tools to add residential development and change build-out capacity for the purposes of developing planning scenarios. Model output will describe the number of new residences and will use Python scripting to combine GIS inputs and outputs with R. Suitability analyses and forecasting results associated with modeled scenarios will be compared using common impact analysis. The contractor will use Montana framework layers and develop ancillary layers.

Datasets employed in this process include cadastral, CAMA property tax attributes, digital elevation models, SSURGO soils, wetlands and land use, GCDB, the Montana transportation framework, NHD perennial streams, supplemented with demographic and economic data generalized with analysis techniques requiring the contractor have a commercial ESRI Business Analyst Desktop license. These data permit generalized, value-added GIS layer deliverables that comply with MLIA public dissemination of value-added commercial data and do not violate license restrictions for proprietary ESRI software. We anticipate combining layers into a generalized planning grid geodatabase.

Additional framework and derivative layers that supplement CommunityViz models include NAIP ortho-imagery and other data such as wildlife corridors analysis, Department of Revenue forest and agricultural productivity, wildland-urban interface fuel modeling, and the Western Governors WREZ layers.

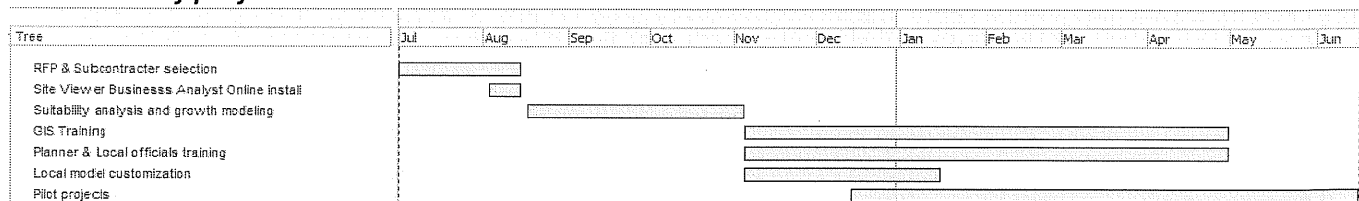
Other deliverables will include training exercises that are appropriate for county officials, planning board members, planners, and other community decision-makers, as well as training manuals, metadata, and documentation.

***c. Acceptance Criteria (how can the Department judge whether the deliverables are complete and meet the project objectives and comply with the scope of work)***

Measurable indicators of acceptance criteria will include anonymous training evaluations by participants; scope and iterative progress documented on a project website (we propose to use Socialtext software, as it allows a time series analysis of progressive use of the system and a window into the level of adoption and understanding by local staff); evaluation of growth planning in each county and tangible differences in approaches using non-spatial and geospatial capabilities.

Other indicators include the number of staff trained, and the number of elected officials and staff engaged in model consultation and system building processes. Although our approach involves sophisticated geospatial analysis, implementation and use of this information is intended to be simple and easily measurable.

***d. Timeline of project***



***d. Staff roles and responsibilities (grantee)- demonstrate with examples of your ability to accomplish this work***

Planning and GIS staff as well as state, federal, and other partners will receive training in the project data sets, modeling procedures, and decision-support software. Persons trained will make individual commitments to provide regional support to partners with limited resources. Because of existing workloads and responsibilities, and limitations expressed by the partners, we propose supplementing volunteer outreach efforts with contracted services.

Contracted services will provide initial capacity building and training. Teton County will solicit competitively-bid requests for proposals for the scope of work described above and the project deliverables. The request for proposals and subsequent contract(s) will require that the contractor(s) identify the capacity, personnel, hardware, software, experience, management, and other resources included in the scope of work above, to accomplish the work in the required time.

**3. Geography Affected**

The geographic focus of this project includes Teton, Pondera and Lewis and Clark counties, and communities within these counties. Additional key partners are the Great Falls Development Authority, state agencies including the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Lewis and Clark National Forest, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, among the others named above. We anticipate that after the successful launching of this project, similar efforts will be initiated in other parts of Montana.

**4a. Detailed Budget**

Category	Applicant Share (including in-kind)	MLIA Share	Other Share	Total
a. Personnel	\$7,500		\$24,000	\$31,500
b. Fringe Benefits	\$2,625		\$8,400	\$11,025
c. Travel	\$500	\$9,000	\$5,000	\$14,500
d. Equipment	\$3,000	\$1,500	\$15,000	\$19,500
e. Supplies	\$250	\$250	\$1,000	\$1,500
f. Contractual		\$55,640		\$55,640
g. Other (Software licenses, lab rental)		\$6,300	\$1,500	\$7,800
h. Admin. costs		\$3,600		\$3,600
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$13,875</b>	<b>\$76,290</b>	<b>\$54,900</b>	<b>\$145,065</b>

**4b. Budget summary for each participant (including subcontracts)**

Category	Applicant	Subcontractor	Local partners	Total
a. Personnel	\$7,500		\$24,000	\$31,500
b. Fringe Benefits	\$2,625		\$8,400	\$11,025
c. Travel	\$500	\$9,000	\$5,000	\$14,500
d. Equipment	\$3,000	\$1,500	\$15,000	\$19,500
e. Supplies	\$250	\$250	\$1,000	\$1,500
f. Contractual		\$55,640		\$55,640
g. Other (Software licenses, lab rental)		\$6,300	\$1,500	\$7,800
h. Admin. costs	\$3,600			\$3,600
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$17,475</b>	<b>\$72,690</b>	<b>\$54,900</b>	<b>\$145,065</b>

Applicant share is based on in-kind and/or matched funds or activities. Estimates are associated with being the lead partner and costs associated with also being a participant. MLIA share is largely associated with contracted services and associated costs to carry out the substance of the proposal. This includes data acquisition and processing, analysis and modeling, workshops and training. Administrative costs are associated with overhead and fixed costs. Other share in-kind and/or match estimates relate to personnel, travel, and other costs anticipated to be incurred by partners. For example, personnel costs are estimated by assuming that over the life of the project 10 staff from partner groups will spend 160 hours devoted to work on this project.

**5. Statements of support must be included from any party listed as a partner. Other statements of support will not be evaluated and should not be submitted (not counted toward 5 page limit)**

**6. Renewable Grant Accountability Report:**

If you received a FY2010 MLIA Grant you must file a report documenting the progress you have made toward meeting the requirements of that grant (not counted toward the 5 page limit).

**7. Authorized Signature**

**Authorizing Statement**

I hereby certify that the information and all statements in this application are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge and that the project or activity complies with all applicable state, local and federal laws and regulations.

I further certify that this project will comply with applicable statutory and regulatory standards.

I further certify that I am (we are) authorized to enter into a binding agreement with the Montana Department of Administration to obtain a grant if this application receives approval.

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date 2/16/2010

Teton County Commissioner

**Signature and Title of Authorized Representative(s) of Public Entity Applicant**



**Lewis and Clark County  
Community Development and Planning**

316 N Park Ave., Room 404, Helena, MT 59623

Phone 406-447-8374

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February 9, 2010

Robin Trenbeath  
Montana Geographic Information Officer  
Montana Department of Administration/ITSD  
Base Map Service Center  
PO Box 200113  
Helena, MT 59620-0113

Dear Mr. Trenbeath:

I am writing this letter in support of the Rocky Mountain Front Local Government Planning Cooperative MLIAC Proposal. The Lewis and Clark County Community Development and Planning Office is excited about the opportunities this grant could hold for us. Our office will be participating by providing informational assistance as well as attending trainings. This grant will allow Lewis and Clark County, as well as all other participating entities, to expand our skills and knowledge.

The Rocky Mountain Front Local Government Planning Cooperative MLIAC Proposal is a unique proposal that pulls various areas together and the Lewis and Clark County Community Development and Planning Office is proud to support it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kelly Blake".

Kelly Blake, Director  
Community Development and Planning  
Lewis & Clark County  
[kblake@co.lewis-clark.mt.us](mailto:kblake@co.lewis-clark.mt.us)

## **Teton County Planning Department**

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Choteau, Mt. 59422  
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February 11, 2010

Robin Trenbeath, Montana Geographic Information Officer  
Mt. Department of Administration/ITSD  
Base Map Service Center  
P.O. Box 200113  
Helena, MT 59620-0113

Dear Mr. Trenbeath,

As a listed participant and the Primary Applicant, Teton County would like to express our support for this grant and project.

Partnerships that this grant describes are essential in order to get this important work accomplished with limited funds. Teton County and most of the partners are not in a financial position to acquire the important data to make sound decisions for the future. Being a historically rural, Ag based economy; data and modeling are very limited in this region. Changes are occurring in this region and important decisions are being made on limited information.

This project would be a proactive step towards these Counties and region helping themselves, and in the long run, helping the natural resources of the State of Montana.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Paul F. Wick". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Paul Wick/Teton County Planning Department



DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
AND CONSERVATION



BRIAN SCHWEITZER, GOVERNOR

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STATE OF MONTANA

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HELENA, MONTANA 59620-1601

February 16, 2010

Robin Trenbeath  
Montana Geographic Information Officer  
PO Box 20013  
Helena, MT 59620-0113

Dear Mr. Trenbeath,

With this letter, I acknowledge the DNRC partnership with the Rocky Mountain Front Local Government Planning Cooperative project. The DNRC has significant state trust lands in the project area, and the management of the lands would benefit from such a GIS decision support system. We look forward to working with the other partners in the project as they seek funding and support for the implementation.

Again, the MT DNRC is a partner in the GIS land use planning effort along the Rocky Mountain Front.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary Sexton".

Mary Sexton  
DNRC Director

Cc: Eric Eneboe, Tom Schultz

**MONTANA**  
**Department of Commerce**

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Anthony J. Preite, Director

February 10, 2010

Robin Trenbeath  
Montana Geographic Information Officer  
Montana Department of Administration/ITSD  
Base Map Service Center  
PO Box 20013  
Helena, MT 59620-0113

**RE: Rocky Mountain Front Local Government Planning Cooperative MLIAC Proposal**

Dear Mr. Trenbeath,

I am writing in support of the Rocky Mountain Front Local Government Planning Cooperative MLIAC Proposal. It is important to note that the Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP) here at the Department of Commerce provides land use technical assistance to local governments throughout the state in order to encourage the development of well planned and attractive communities to support the State's economic development efforts. This proposal will help advance these goals.

Jerry Grebenc, CTAP's manager, has on many occasions noted the need for a land use decision-support system for local governments that have limited staff and resources. We believe strongly enough in the proposal that the Department of Commerce and our CTAP program are committed to becoming one of the many partners in ensuring its success.

In conclusion we encourage you to approve this capacity building proposal.

Sincerely,

Andrew Poole



Deputy Director

BRIAN SCHWEITZER, GOVERNOR



**Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks**

P.O. Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701  
(406) 444-3889  
February 10, 2010

Robin Trenbeath  
Montana Geographic Information Officer  
MT Dept. of Administration (ITSD)  
Base Map Service Center  
P.O. Box 200113  
Helena, MT 59620-0113

RE: MLIAC Proposal entitled, ***Rocky Mountain Front: Local Planning in a Regional Cooperative***

Dear Robin:

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks enthusiastically supports this MLIAC proposal.

The demonstrated interest of Teton County and its neighbors in building their GIS capacity in a cooperative, cost-efficient fashion is commendable. We are excited by the opportunity this project offers to share our data from the Crucial Areas Assessment with local planners, local officials, and local citizens in such a richly endowed region of the state. Further, we see opportunities here for our field biologists and land use planning specialist to work collaboratively with other partners in the region, to utilize what promises to be a user-friendly toolset in order to advance local goals for land use planning and economic development.

We look forward to participating in the project.

Sincerely,

T.O. Smith  
Strategic Planning and Data Services  
Bureau Chief

cc: Janet Hess-Herbert, Data Services Section Supervisor  
Doris Fischer, FWP Land Use Planning Specialist  
Ken Wall, Geodata Services, Inc.



# United States Department of the Interior

## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Division of Realty - Montana Habitat Program

922 Bootlegger Trail

Great Falls, Montana 59404-6133

Phone (406)727-7400

IN REPLY REFER TO:

February 10, 2010

Robin Trenbeath, Montana Geographic Information Officer  
MT Dept of Administration/ITSD  
Base Map Service Center  
P.O. Box 200113  
Helena, Montana 59620-0113

Dear Ms. Trenbeath:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) would like to express our strong support for Teton County's Grant Application for the Montana Land Information Act. We have several programs based out of Benton Lake office, north of Great Falls, which are active on the Rocky Mountain Front. In particular, the Rocky Mountain Front Conservation Area was established by the Service in 2005 to protect 170,000 acres of privately-owned, high quality wildlife habitat with voluntary conservation easements. To date, the Service has protected nearly 50,000 acres of private land along the Front under this program.

It is very important for us to focus the easement program in areas where they will have the greatest benefit. The planning process resulting from this grant would make a significant contribution to this effort. The grant would also be critical in helping all the partners across the landscape meet the ultimate goal of thoughtful, state-of-the art planning effort that would ensure the economic viability, recreational opportunities and abundant natural resources reach their highest potential throughout this region.

Sincerely,

Gary L. Sullivan  
State Coordinator



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Lewis and Clark  
National Forest

1101 15<sup>th</sup> Street North  
P.O. Box 869  
Great Falls, MT 59403-0869  
406 791-7700  
FAX 406 731-5302

File Code: 1580

Date: February 10, 2010

Robin Trenbeath  
Montana Geographic Information Officer  
Montana Dept of Administration/ITSD  
Base Map Service Center  
PO Box 200113  
Helena, MT 59620-0113

Dear Mr. Trenbeath;

Regarding the grant application that will be submitted to the Montana Land Information Advisory Council by the Teton County Commissioners to develop a local and regional cooperative planning model on the Rocky Mountain Front, please accept my letter of support.

Developing a regional collaborative along the Rocky Mountain Front to addresses growth, economic development, and resource-related issues through a land use planning decision-support system is a positive step in preserving and protecting the health of this incredible landscape.

Using Montana framework layers and significant GIS data to develop a landscape suitability analysis and a decision support system will ultimately help elected officials and public land managers bridge technological gaps and foster a collaborative working\planning environment in the region.

As a partner, the Lewis and Clark National Forest looks forward to working with Teton, Pondera and Lewis and Clark counties and their inclusive municipalities along with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Land Management.

This project is worthy of being awarded a grant. It will be useful to the forest service for planning efforts and during emergency situations.

Sincerely,

LESLEY W. THOMPSON  
Forest Supervisor

cc: Michael A Munoz



**February 12, 2010**

**Robin Trenbeath, Montana Geographic Information Officer  
Montana Department of Administration  
Base Map Service Center  
P.O. Box 200113  
Helena, MT 59620-0113**

**Dear Mr. Trenbeath:**

**RE: Fiscal Year 2011 Montana Land Information Act Grant Application**

**Project: Rocky Mountain Front: Local Planning in a Regional Cooperative**

**Primary Applicant: Teton County Commissioners (w/ more than a dozen partners)**

**As a professional wildlife biologist and conservationist with over 40 years experience in Montana - 36+ years with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (20 years working with issues along the East Front) - I strongly endorse the application for Montana Land Information Act funds to map and layer the values and development potentials so that the Commissioners and their constituents and interested organizations, agencies and individuals can have a common foundation from which to make reasoned and informed decisions. No such foundation exists now. Currently every concerned individual, organization and agency now approaches the Montana Front with its own history, list of facts, and special perspectives.**

**It is possible, with today's technology, to create a GIS program with all of the information needed and all of the major variables mapped and put in play so that with a Power Point presentation or published material, well annotated, politicians, decision makers and leaders, at a local, state, regional, national & international level can debate issues using the same information set. Hopefully, so they can make better decisions. I have seen this done.**

**At a Crown of the Continent Workshop, February 1, 2001, at the Prestige Inn in Cranbrook, B.C., Dr. Brad Stelfox, FOREM Consulting, Bragg Creek, Alberta, gave a dinner speech titled; "Cumulative effects in the Oldman River Basin: where we have been, where we are now, where we are going?". He used a sophisticated Power Point presentation developed as part of a PhD project at the University of Calgary. Part of Dr. Stelfox's work involved getting 20-year projections from all of the developing interest (energy planners, farmers/ranchers, builders, bankers, transportation specialists, water users, timber managers, feed lot owners, urban planners, etc.). The results were spellbinding, over 50 people questioned the speaker for two hours. I have never seen anything like it, before or since. I am sure something along this line could be done for the Front with the proposed budget. The work was guided by Dr. Michael Quinn of the University of Calgary and**

promoted by the Miistakis Institute for the Rockies (Calgary). The only problem was it came a little late for southwest Alberta. Development had already compromised some of the areas world-ranked scenic and natural resources.

The Rocky Mountain Front from the Yukon to Mexico is replete with examples of what we do not want to do in Montana.

Poor development can be avoided along the Front if we act soon. The CEO of The Conservation Fund, Lawrence Selzer, told his Board of Directors in April of 2007 that Montana's Front had about a ten-year window before its remaining world-class natural resources pass a no-return-threshold of incompatible development.

Frankly, I do not know where in Montana the Department of Administration could make a more meaningful investment of its Land Information monies.

Montana's East Front is unique. Three habitat types - the Rocky Mountains, the mountain foothills and the mixed-grass prairie lands - exist in close proximity. The flora and fauna of each type are press together making it the most biologically diverse country in our State. It is also the biologically richest part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest road-less area surviving in the continental United States. The value of this roadless land increases with every mile of additional paved road in the U.S.

The current economic down-turn makes funding for these kinds of projects harder to collect. I am afraid we will soon see more decisions made inaction and delay.

I know this proposal is what the legislators had in mind when they passed Land Information Act.

Sincerely,



Mike Aderhold  
3310 14<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.  
Great Falls, MT 59405  
Phone: 406-453-2549  
[Mikeaderhold68@gmail.com](mailto:Mikeaderhold68@gmail.com)

Mailed to:  
Corlene Martin  
Rocky Mountain Front Field Coordinator  
P.O. Box 215 / 29 Park Ave.  
Choteau, MT 59422  
[Corlene@3rivers.net](mailto:Corlene@3rivers.net)

February 9, 2010

Robin Trenbeath, Montana Geographic Information Officer  
MT Dept. of Administration/ITSD  
Base Map Service Center  
PO 200113  
Helena, MT 59620-0113

Dear Mr. Trenbeath,

The Nature Conservancy in Montana would like to express its whole hearted support for Teton County's Grant Application for the Montana Land Information Act. The Nature Conservancy is a scientifically driven, conservation organization that has been working along the Rocky Mountain Front for over 32 years. We have relied heavily on sound scientific data to guide us in our work in protecting unique wildlife and plant habitat through conservation easements or at our Pine Butte Swamp Preserve. The Conservancy appreciates how valuable GIS based data systems can be for effective planning efforts.

Many challenges face the communities lying along the Rocky Mountain Front, including how to balance the needs of issues ranging from economic vitality, maintenance of a rural lifestyle, potential energy development, natural resources management, and residential growth issues to tourism and recreational uses. This grant promises to help give decision makers, partners and communities the tools they need to make more informed choices about their future.

Sincerely,



David Carr  
Rocky Mountain Front Program Manager  
The Nature Conservancy





Robin Trenbeath  
Montana Geographic Information Officer  
Montana Department of Administration/ITSD  
Base Map Service Center  
PO Box 200113  
Helena, MT 59620-0113

February 16, 2010

Mr. Trenbeath,

I am pleased to write this letter in support of Teton County's application related to "Rocky Mountain Front: Local Planning in a Regional Cooperative". I am very familiar with the use of geospatial data as a tool in long-range forecasting and strategic planning having worked extensively with Minnesota's Land Management Information Center (LMIC) in the develop of land use updates and comprehensive water planning and can attest to the utility and value of a project such as this (particularly in rural areas).

Praxis Strategy Group recently completed a long-rage economic/defense diversification project that focused on small business development, agriculture and value-added agriculture and energy within the Sweet Grass Development region. The strategies developed as part of this effort with significant input from civic, business and though leaders from the various counties and communities in the area will serve as a blueprint for ongoing development efforts to help "raise the bar" economically within the region through the retention and expansion of existing businesses, growth of new businesses and development of attainable strategies and processes to revitalize the region capitalizing on existing assets and resources.

This project will provide the region a tool to continue to visualize, refine and measure the impact of their actions and plan effectively through the use of a robust modeling tool that incorporates relevant socio-economic and demographic data.

I strongly support this effort and know that it can be implemented in a fashion, with the benefits, outlined in the proposal.

Sincerely,

Douglas McDonald  
Senior Associate  
Praxis Strategy Group